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ABSTRACT

Government officials, researchers, and especially educators must consider the "big picture" as they develop strategies to address violence in schools. This report presents findings of a study conducted by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing's advisory panel on school violence. The study identifies the effects of school violence on students and school effectiveness and describes the preparation of certified personnel to cope with such behavior. Data were derived from focus-group sessions conducted with over 600 participants and from surveys of over 700 California credential candidates and their professors; 320 recently credentialed teachers, administrators and student personnel service providers; almost 100 school board members; 49 credential coordinators from 49 states; and more than 360 higher-education teacher-training coordinators nationwide. Contrary to popular belief, school violence in the broad context was not seen by educators as a very big problem. Verbal intimidation and bullying occurred frequently on campuses, but only 2 to 3 percent of educators saw these subtler forms of violence. Most educators reported feeling inadequately prepared to address school violence. Fights and gang activities were the most frequently mentioned forms of violence by focus group participants overall. Multicultural sensitivity training was the most frequently mentioned strategy to address school violence. Extensive recommendations are made for teachers, administrators, student personnel service providers, other educators, educational system consumers, criminal justice agencies, local communities, and the Legislature. Eight figures are included. (LMI)

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Creating Caring Relationships to Foster Academic Excellence

Recommendation For Reducing Violence in California Schools

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Executive Summary of Final Report

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Advisory Panel on School Violence
Commission on Teacher Credentialing
State of California
October 1995

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Executive Summary of Final Report

Creating Caring Relationships to Foster Academic Excellence

Recommendations For Reducing Violence in California Schools

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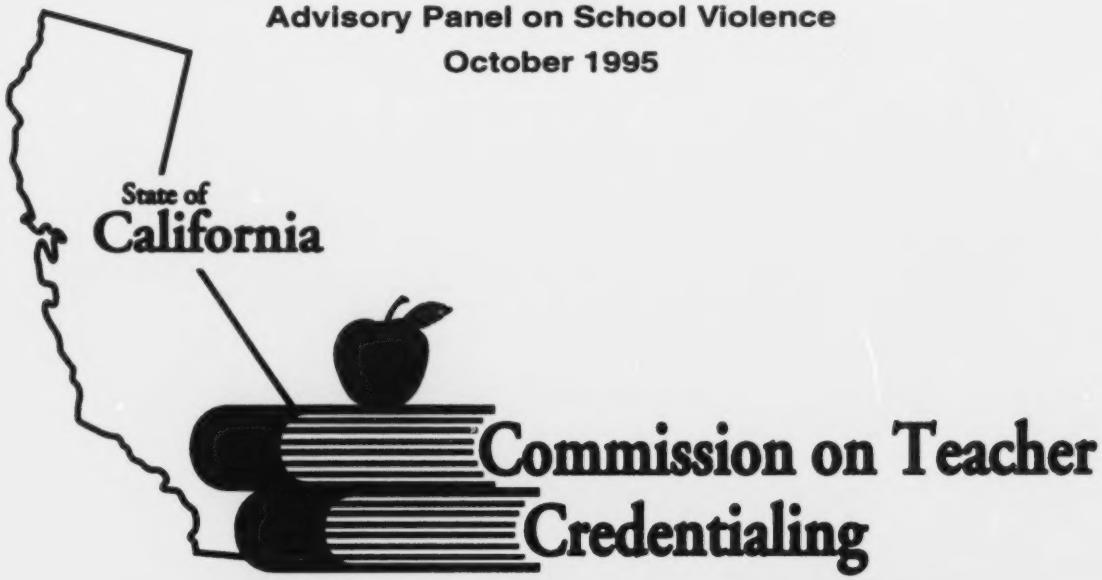
October 1995



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1992-95

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Advanced Students' Master's Degree Thesis Projects

Graduate Students in the Division of Social Work at California State University, Sacramento Used Information Collected by the Panel for their Master's Degree Theses in 1994.

Name	Thesis Title
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Theresa Leal B.A. San Francisco College for Women	*A Study of School Violence* *A Plan for California Credentialed Educators*
Sangita Narayan B.A., CSU Sacramento	*How California School Administrators Are Addressing School Violence*
Almira Pañer B.A., UC Davis	*How California Support Staff And Other School Personnel Are Addressing School Violence*
Kathleen Scott B.A., UC Berkeley	*How California Teachers Are Addressing School Violence*
Kristina Wong B.A., UC Irvine	*Statewide Focus Groups On School Violence In California*

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Acknowledgments

Original Collaborators

This report and its recommendations would not have been possible without the teamwork and cooperation of literally hundreds of people. The diligent and persistent activists in southern California, including advisory panelist Gus Frias of the Los Angeles County Office of Education, who convinced state Senator Cecil Green to sponsor Senate Bill 2460, in 1990, enabled the Commission to move forward on this very important issue. Senator Green's office staff, the Office of Criminal Justice Planning, the California Department of Education, the California School Boards Association, as well as many other organizations and individuals provided the pool of more than 100 very well qualified nominees from which the 16 advisory panel members were chosen.

Statewide Participation

At their initial meeting, panel members determined a need for statewide data on the prevalence of violence in schools. County school superintendents and their staffs were very instrumental in assisting the panel in gathering the data by setting up focus group meetings, first to gather initial data and then to provide feedback on tentative recommendations. The panel could not have completed its study without the assistance of County Superintendents of Education and their staffs in Alameda, Fresno, Los Angeles, Merced, Orange, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, Santa Barbara, and Shasta Counties. Likewise, college and university deans in those same 11 counties were instrumental in assisting the panel to set up feedback sessions with credential candidates and university personnel. Also public school students, administrators, teachers, counselors, parents, and community representatives are to be commended for their participation at various points in the panel's work.

County school superintendents and their staffs were very instrumental in assisting the panel in setting up focus group meetings, first to gather initial data and then to provide feedback on tentative recommendations.

Graduate Student Involvement

The panel will always be indebted to Professor John Coney, faculty advisor in the Division of Social Work, California

State University, Sacramento for his tireless efforts to work with seven graduate students who accepted this project as the research for their master's degree theses. Analysis of the survey and focus group data and the literature reviews by Jeff Cowen, Mikie Higgins, Theresa Leal, Sangita Narayan, Almira Paner, Kathleen Scott, and Kristina Wong were extremely helpful.

National Involvement

There were also federal, state and local government officials who provided extensive documentation and other information on the topic of school violence. Numerous program coordinators from throughout the United States, but especially from here in California, also contributed significantly to the panel's information base. Over 680 California credential candidates, college and university faculty and administrators responded to survey questionnaires. In addition, the panel feels fortunate to have received a 100 percent response to a survey sent to the Commission's counterpart agencies in the other 49 states. We also extend a warm thanks to the 364 college and university credential program coordinators in 44 states from throughout the United States who responded to a panel survey.

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Productive Advisory Panelists

Lastly, and certainly most importantly, the advisory panel members and liaison members, who served as active, productive panelists, for over three years to make this report possible, are to be commended. They also deserve a heart-felt thanks for spending hours in panel meetings, subcommittee meetings, focus group sessions, independent visits to exemplary programs, as well as numerous hours reading various documents. Special thanks go to members of the panel whose assistance during the closing months of the panel's work on the final report was much appreciated. Michael Furlong, Dorie Marshall and Marcel Soriano served beyond the call of duty. A list of this hard-working panel's members can be found on previous pages.

Clerical Support

A special thanks must also be extended to Carol Roberts who got to know most panelists and graduate students working on the project on a first-name basis. In addition to scheduling most of the panel meetings, processing panelists' reimbursement forms and translating the panel's notes, she also performed numerous other duties as secretary to the advisory panel coordinator.

The panel received a 100 percent response to a survey sent to the Commission's counterpart agencies in the other 49 states.

Introduction

Fights, Drive-by Shootings, and Verbal Put Downs or Name Callings all Disrupt the Educational Process. They are Prohibitively Expensive Because They Strain Existing and Limited School Resources. They Must be Prevented or Managed Properly Whenever They Occur.

The Big Picture

Government officials, researchers, and especially educators must consider the "big picture" as they develop strategies to address violence in schools (and in the home, the community, and society as a whole). *Any act that causes harm* must be incorporated into the definition of violence. Otherwise we will never get at the root causes of the more serious violent acts that have been catching everyone's attention lately.

Any Violence Disrupts

News from throughout the United States has focused on incidents such as shootings, rapes, knifings, and other sensational acts of violence in American schools. Many educators, however, are equally concerned about the more subtle and much more frequent acts of violence that occur daily on most campuses, such as personal put-downs, verbal threats, and various forms of harassment and neglect that can eventually lead to more serious violence.[1] Whichever end of the school violence spectrum one chooses to ponder, the ultimate concern is very familiar—fear, a negative school climate, and the disruption of learning. These things, unfortunately, drain school resources and interfere with the educational process and must be addressed, immediately.

Media "Sound Bites"

In four major national newspapers (Los Angeles Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, and the Christian Science Monitor) nearly half of the articles written over an eleven-year period abstracted under the key phrase "school violence" were published during 1992 and 1993. That is, the phrase "school violence" appeared the same number of times during the previous nine years (1982 to 1991) as it did in the two-year period of 1992 to 1993.[2] With that kind of media attention and the resulting public concern, it becomes easy to justify shifting valuable and limited resources from education to pay for armed security, metal detectors, and self-defense seminars for school personnel. Such reactions, however, do not resolve the underlying causes of violence in schools.

Educators Should Educate

Severe acts of violence such as shootings, rape and assault are best handled by law enforcement and the criminal justice system. The school's focus should be on basic academic development and, to a lesser extent, personal and social enhancement. Research has shown a direct connection between serious acts of violence and the more subtle forms of "harm" such as pushing, shoving, name calling and various other forms of harassment and neglect.[3] Educators and other school personnel can do a lot about "nipping in the bud" these more subtle forms of harm before they grow into seriously violent acts. Oftentimes educators and other school officials simply need to be made aware of the dangers inherent in their own inconsistent behavior. They need to be mindful of their own modeling behavior, set high expectation levels for students in all areas, be consistent with enforcing school rules and discipline, and show genuine caring and concern for students and colleagues at their school.

Research has shown a direct connection between serious acts of violence and the more subtle forms of "harm" such as pushing, shoving, name calling and various other forms of harassment and neglect. Educators and other school personnel can do a lot about "nipping in the bud" these more subtle forms of harm before they grow into seriously violent acts.[3]

Wasted Time

The strain of violence shows up when teachers' time is diverted from teaching, counselors' time is distracted from helping students with career exploration, administrators' time is taken from program planning, and students' time is taken from serious academic study. When valuable time is taken from the students' and school personnel's peace of mind, anxiety and dissatisfaction become pervasive.

Collaborative Efforts Needed to Prevent All Forms of Harm

In the three years since the panel's effort got underway, it has become clear that schools alone cannot make a lasting impact on reducing violence in California schools. As one considers the "big picture" of the problem, the continuum of violence becomes evident—moving from life threatening acts of violence such as shootings and rape, to physically violent acts such as fights and other forms of assaults, to psychological forms of violence, such as put-downs and other verbal abuse, to social forms of violence, such as social isolation and ostracizing, to developmental forms of violence, such as neglect and the failure to empower students to achieve.[4] Schools are part of the greater society and they reflect the values and behaviors common to the local community. Schools must seek assistance from community members because of the increasing problems, differences, and circumstances students bring to school, e.g., cultural, ethnic, racial, developmental, and/or behavior patterns and lifestyles.[5] Everyone

must be involved in addressing the "big picture" of violence. Teachers, students, administrators, and school support personnel must themselves be committed, but they must also reach out for help to parents, health and human service providers, law enforcement, and other community groups in order to create safe environments where students can learn, teachers can teach and other educators can play their support roles.

Resilient youth overcome difficult home and community environments when adults are caring and expectations are high, when relationships with peers and/or school personnel are good, and when wholesome interaction with their communities is encouraged.[6, 7]

Resilient Youth

Research by both Bernard and Hawkins has shown that many youth who live in high risk environments are resilient enough to overcome the many stressors of their environment and become successful, productive people, despite what seem to be impossible odds. Resilient youth overcome difficult home and community environments when adults are caring and expectations are high, when relationships with peers and/or school personnel are good, and when wholesome interactions with their communities are encouraged.[6, 7] Violence can be seen as manageable and even preventable when one looks at setting an appropriate foundation to prevent harm, developing character, self-esteem and personal and social responsibility, and setting the stage for schools to develop positive, life-affirming environments.

References and Other Supportive Documentation

(For Introduction)

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2. Melvyl System Data Bases (1993). Melvyl On-line Catalog, News. Oakland, CA: Regents, University of California. Compiled by Information Access Company.

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Background

The Beginning

Through Senate Bill 2460 (C. Green, 1990), the California Legislature and Governor directed the Commission on Teacher Credentialing to engage in a series of leadership activities, primarily focused on improving the preparation of all certificated educators to more effectively cope with violence in California schools.[1] In February 1992, the Commission approved a plan to carry out this charge. A key element of this plan included the appointment of a statewide advisory panel whose first meeting was held in May 1992.

The Commission appointed a panel that included K-12 educators and students, university professors, individuals from the private sector, school board members, community volunteers, credential candidates, and law enforcement personnel. In addition, the panel included liaisons from several government agencies. All participants were selected for the panel because they were well-informed and experienced in areas of school violence.

Mission of School Violence Panel

Our mission was to develop and recommend leadership strategies and training standards necessary to create a positive school environment free from violence where the success and development of all students and those who serve them may flourish.

Panel's Charge

The charge given to the panel by the Commission included the following:

- Solicit advice and information from a broad spectrum of school personnel and other public entities.

- Prepare a report to the Commission on the effects of school violence on students and school effectiveness, and on the preparation of certificated personnel to cope with such behavior.

- Present recommendations to the Commission for specific actions including appropriate leadership initiatives.

The panel's task was further delineated by SB 2264 (Andal, 1993) which directed the Commission to adopt standards that address principles of school safety in training programs for teachers, school administrators and pupil personnel service providers.[2]

A Return to the Source

After 18 months of research and analysis, the panel produced preliminary results of

its study and tentative recommendations, based on its findings. The panel developed a discussion document and received comments from educators and others throughout California on the panel's tentative recommendations. From that feedback and other information, the panel developed its final report.

The panel established the following definition of violence, working assumptions and study limitations.

Assumptions Relating to the Definition of Violence

Our society has become increasingly violent. Violence is a public health and safety condition endemic in our society. Therefore, we assume:

- When an individual is damaged by violence, society is diminished.
- Violence is reciprocal and communicable. Violence is contagious. It is transmitted by overt, indiscriminate aggression and in subtle, unintentional ways.
- All forms of violence are harmful and damaging. Physical, psychological, social and developmental violence include neglect, inconsistent behavior and low expectations by peers and adults.
- Violence is not the human condition. It is a learned behavior which is preventable.
- Violence cuts across all lines of culture and ethnicity and is not exclusive to any single group or socioeconomic class.
- Prevention of violence requires education of and by all segments of society. It requires a reassessment of how conflict is viewed and resolved.
- The historical development of this society has been based on violence, and violence continues to be a cultural norm.
- Individuals should be educated to understand that they have choices in the way they behave and express their feelings, and that they are responsible for the consequences of their actions.
- Effective resolution of violence requires early intervention that respects the integrity and dignity of all concerned.
- In order to establish safe schools, school personnel need to be increasingly aware of the nature and implications of violence in their schools, and should be trained in ways to deal effectively with that violence.

Definition of Violence

Violence is a public health and safety condition that often results from individual, social, economic, political and institutional disregard for basic human needs. Violence includes physical and nonphysical harm which causes damage, pain, injury or fear. Violence disrupts the school environment and results in the debilitation of personal development which may lead to hopelessness and helplessness.[2,3]

Study Limitations

Members of the panel did everything within their power to eliminate confounding variables and to make the findings of this study as reliable and as valid as possible. The 320 recently credentialed teachers, school administrators and pupil personnel service providers who responded to questionnaires were randomly selected. Program coordinators in all 72 California colleges and universities were sent questionnaires with a majority of them responding. Responses were received from CTC's counterparts in the other 49 states and the District of Columbia. All 850 members of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education were sent questionnaires with a 42 percent response rate. And, in order to ensure diversity within the over 100 focus groups participating in the study, local educators were instructed to select students, parents, teachers, school administrators, support personnel and community members of all races, ages, socioeconomic levels, grade and experience levels, and of both sexes.

Whenever the topic of youth violence or school violence is discussed, there are inevitably some differences of opinion about which specific behaviors or incidents constitute violence. Given this circumstance, the panel decided to allow each survey respondent to answer questions using their own personal definition of violence based on a wide range of behaviors listed on the survey.

Conclusions derived from this study are not necessarily generalizable to all populations in the state.

References and Other Supportive Documentation

(For Background)

1. Green, C. (1990). "Schools: gang violence prevention," California Senate Bill 2460, Chapter 526, EC Section 44276.5.

2. Andal, D. (1993). ""Teacher Credentials: school safety instruction," California Senate Bill 2264, Chapter 743, EC Section 44276.1.

3. Pittsburgh Public Schools, (November 1993). Safe Schools Project Report (p. 37).

Executive Summary

Schools Reflect Their Communities

Communities beset by multiple social stressors such as poverty, crime, drug abuse, and ineffective government leadership will see the impact of these conditions on the climate of their school campuses. Schools are a reflection of the communities they serve. At a minimum, the experiences that children have in the community will be with them at school and may affect their ability to focus on their academic challenges. For example, in a major study recently sponsored by the National Institute of Mental Health, elementary school age children in Washington D.C. reported much more exposure to violence in their community than on their school campuses. Significantly, students exposed to the most violence, primarily as witnesses of violent acts, were more likely to perform poorly in school.[1]

New Research

There is relatively new research being reported that shows some youth from high risk environments are able to overcome the negative effects of their environments and become successful, productive individuals in spite of the adverse conditions of their homes and communities. Many youth are found to be resilient when they have been supported by school officials and other adults who have either exposed youth to the more positive aspects of life or assisted them in experiencing non-at-risk activities and behaviors. In other words, there is hope even for those youth whose environments are filled with negative experiences and multiple stressors.

Many youth are found to be resilient when they have been supported by school officials and other adults who have either exposed youth to the more positive aspects of life or assisted them in experiencing non-at-risk activities and behaviors.

A Collaborative Effort

Educators must be sensitive to the experiences and needs of the students and families that they serve. Likewise, community agencies and institutions must recognize their role in supporting school efforts to reduce violence as part of a community-wide effort to reduce violence. Effective safety planning in schools requires a true collaboration of school personnel, local businesses, civic leaders, religious leaders, and government leaders. "It will take all of us reaching out, understanding, mobilizing, and working together to overcome the culture of youth violence that has been created. Rejecting violence in favor of

respect and hope will ultimately mean a brighter future for us all, said former U.S. Senator Al Gore who is currently Vice President of the United States.[2] When schools are viewed as integrated within the broader community, resources can be used efficiently. Such a community-wide effort recognizes that it is a societal obligation to educate our children, not just a school effort. This approach to school violence prevention acknowledges that what is required is a partnership among key community constituencies, one that shares responsibility and resources to solve the problem and de-emphasizes blame for the problem.[2] Violence that occurs at school is something that affects all of us and its solution demands everyone's involvement.

> "It will take all of us reaching out, understanding, mobilizing, and working together to overcome the culture of youth violence that has been created. Rejecting violence in favor of respect and hope will ultimately mean a brighter future for us all."[2]
>
> Al Gore, U.S. Senator from Tennessee

In February 1992, the Commission appointed a statewide advisory panel to develop and recommend leadership strategies and training standards necessary to create a positive school environment free from violence. The panel included K-12 educators, school board members, community volunteers, students, law enforcement personnel, and liaisons from several governmental agencies who were all well informed and experienced in areas of school violence.

Study Participants

To fulfill its mission,

- The panel conducted a review of existing literature.

- Panelists led a series of focus group discussions involving more than 600 participants made up of students, parents, teachers, administrators, support staff, law enforcement, and other community persons in the counties of Shasta, Sacramento, Alameda, Merced, Fresno, Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, Riverside, Orange, San Bernardino, and San Diego. Later, panelists returned to those same 11 counties, this time with study results and tentative recommendations, to get additional feedback from the field, including college and university credential candidates and faculty, through over 50 focus group discussions.

- To confirm the findings of focus group discussions, the panel conducted surveys of over 700 California credential candidates and their professors; more than 300 recently credentialed school teachers, administrators, and pupil personnel service providers such as school counselors, psychologists and social workers; almost 100 school board members; state teacher credentialing and licensing directors (CTC's counterparts) in all 49 states, in addition to the District of Columbia; and more than 360 college and university teacher training program coordinators from throughout the United States.

Highlights of Study Findings

Contrary to popular belief, school violence in the broad context was not seen by educators as being a very big problem in the panel's study. Following are the Advisory Panel's primary research findings.

Subtle Violence More Frequent

Educators report that less serious forms of victimization (e.g., pushing, verbal intimidation, bullying) occurs frequently on their school campus.

These less serious forms of victimization do not lead educators to perceive that there is a "very big" school violence problem at their schools. In fact, only about two to three percent of educators see such a problem.

Compared with survey respondents, the focus group participants reported more violence at their schools.

National Studies Concur

Other national studies find a similar pattern. The Louis Harris Survey for the Harvard School of Public Health, for example, reported in 1993 that more than 75 percent of the secondary students in their sample believed that other students faced increased school violence threats, but only 14 percent said that concerns about violence at school affected their own work in class. Similarly, results from the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS) show that fewer 10th graders in 1990 (8.4 percent) reported feeling "unsafe" at school than did 10th graders in 1980 (12.1 percent).

With more than 2000 participants responding to survey questionnaires and meetings in over 100 small focus groups, teachers, school administrators, support staff, students, parents, classified personnel, university personnel, and others agreed that violence occurred regularly and in a variety of forms at their school, but that it was still not a "big," or "very big" problem.

Serious Victimization not a "Big Problem"

Teachers, students and others report high levels of less serious victimization and low levels of serious victimization on school campuses. For a relatively small percentage of people, an event occurs that causes them to reevaluate their basic sense of security at school. This event appears to be, typically, a serious physical assault and/or an incident involving a gun. When someone is literally hit over the head, then school violence is recognized as a serious problem. In the absence of serious violence, many students and teachers report that there is little or no violence problem at their campus or at most, a "moderate" problem.

Thus, what appears to be a paradox is not. The apparent contradiction is a consequence of different personal definitions of violence.

Educators Inadequately Prepared

Not surprisingly, most educators report feeling inadequately prepared to address school violence. The vast majority say that there should be training to address this issue. Educators reported that they would personally welcome training for dealing with school violence. CTC's survey to its counterparts in the other 49 states revealed that California is the first and only state to require school safety training in preparation programs for teachers and other educators.

Mandatory Safety Planning Supported

More than 90 percent of the respondents support mandatory K-12 school safety planning, indicating their level of concern for school safety.

With more than 2000 participants responding to survey questionnaires and meetings in over 100 small focus groups, teachers, school administrators, support staff, students, parents, classified personnel, university personnel, and others agreed that violence occurred regularly and in a variety of forms at their school, but that it was still not a "big," or "very big" problem.

Not Fearful for Own Safety

Many of those participating in small focus groups throughout the state found that fights, verbal abuse (name calling, teasing and put downs) and having personal property stolen were fairly commonplace but did not cause them to fear for their own personal safety. Findings from the survey questionnaire responses were very similar.

Fewer than 5 percent of the overall respondents saw violence as being a "very big" problem, while more than 20 percent said they saw little or "no" problem with violence on their school campuses. About 30 percent of the respondents felt that school violence was a "medium-sized" problem at their schools.

Most educators report feeling inadequately prepared to address school violence. The vast majority say that there should be training to address this issue.

Findings from the surveys confirmed focus group responses to the types of violence experienced in schools, its frequency and causes, and what can be done to address this menacing problem. Not only did survey respondents from California confirm what focus group respondents were saying, but results from out-of-state were also virtually identical to focus group responses in California.

The study findings section of the report deals principally with focus group results. This is the case because the qualitatively rich information from the focus groups is more helpful in understanding the problem and in generating strategies to address it.

HIGHLIGHTS OF FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

VIOLENCE EXPERIENCED

Fights and gang-related activities were the most frequently mentioned forms of violence experienced by focus group participants, overall. (See Figure 1 on page 13.) Verbal abuse was high on the list of experiences for teachers, parents, and support personnel, although school administrators rarely mentioned it. Administrators' main concern was the brandishing of weapons on and around campus. (See Figure 5 on page 17.)

CAUSES OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE

Causes of school violence most frequently mentioned in focus groups were: ethnic and cultural ignorance, gang and group protection activities, and media (TV, music, and video games). (See Figure 2 on page 14.)

Teachers mentioned a lack of values and respect most frequently as a major cause of school violence, whereas students and administrators named gangs as the cause. Administrators also felt that dysfunctional families (over burdened by stress and with limited resources) were associated with violence in the schools. (See Figure 6 on page 18.)

WAYS TO ADDRESS SCHOOL VIOLENCE

Several possible solutions were mentioned in response to what can be done to address school violence. Among the most popular suggestions were: Implement multicultural curriculum; involve community agencies and law enforcement in school partnerships; enforce discipline policies firmly, consistently and fairly; and show concern and interest in students. (See Figure 3 on page 15.)

Students and teachers felt that improved internal and external communication (among and between students and school staff) was the best strategy.

Parents responded, overwhelmingly, that increased parental involvement and parent education on school violence issues were the two best ways to address school violence. Students and teachers felt that improved internal and external communication (among and between students and

school staff) was the best strategy. Administrators most frequently cited training in conflict resolution, problem solving and crisis intervention as being needed to reduce school violence. (See Figure 7 on page 19.)

TRAINING NEEDED FOR EDUCATORS TO ADDRESS SCHOOL VIOLENCE

Multicultural sensitivity training was the most frequently mentioned suggestion to address school violence. Conflict management, resolution and mediation training was also high on the list of suggested training. (See Figure 4 on page 16.)

Support personnel, parents and students felt that communication, human relations, and interpersonal skills were the most important training needed. Teachers and administrators frequently mentioned the need for reality-based (practical field) experiences in a variety of settings and grade levels. Students also felt that active listening skills for teachers were very important. (See Figure 8 on page 20.)

References and Other Supportive Documentation

1. Richters, J. E. (1993). "Community Violence And Children's Development: Toward A Research Agenda For The 1990s," Psychiatry, 56, (pp.3-6).

2. Furlong, M., Morrison, G., & Dear, J. (1994). "Addressing School Violence As Part Of The School's Educational Mission," Preventing School Failure, 38 (3) (pp. 10-18).

3. Gore, A., US. Senator from Tennessee and Democratic candidate for Vice President of the United States (October 1992). "It Takes A Whole Village To Raise A Child," Tennessee Teacher Vol. 60.-

Figure 1

Overall Focus Group Responses to Experiences of School Violence

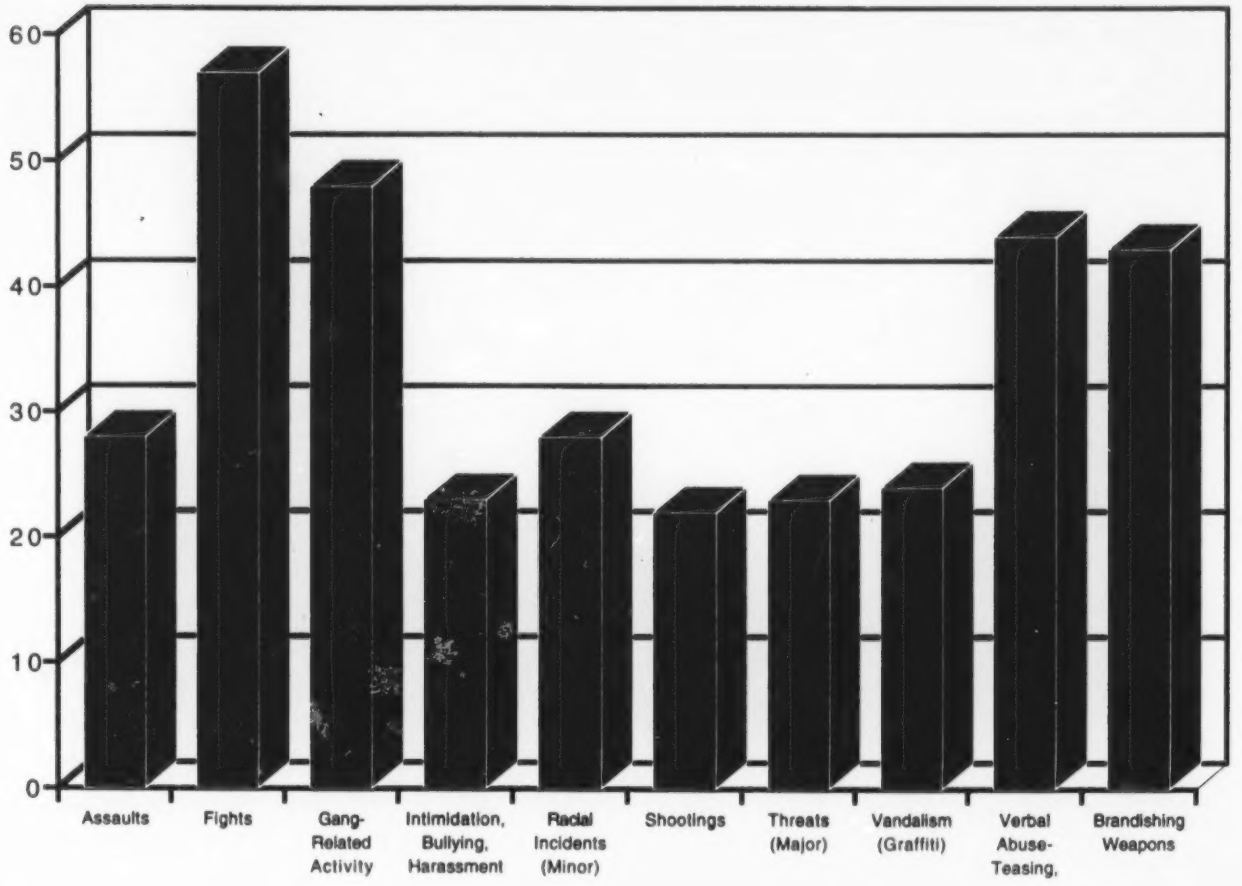


Figure 2

Overall Focus Group Responses to Causes of School Violence

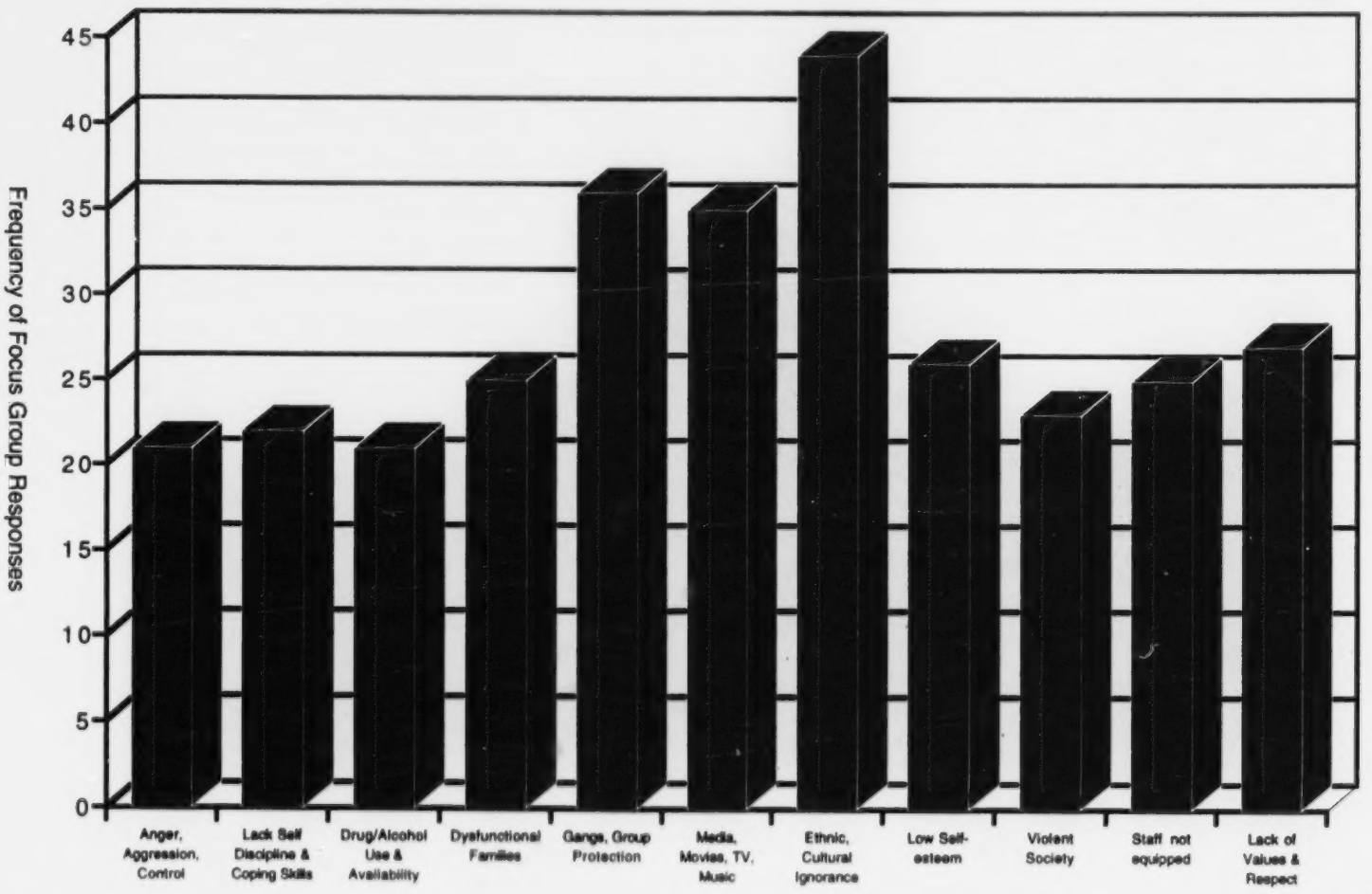


Figure 3

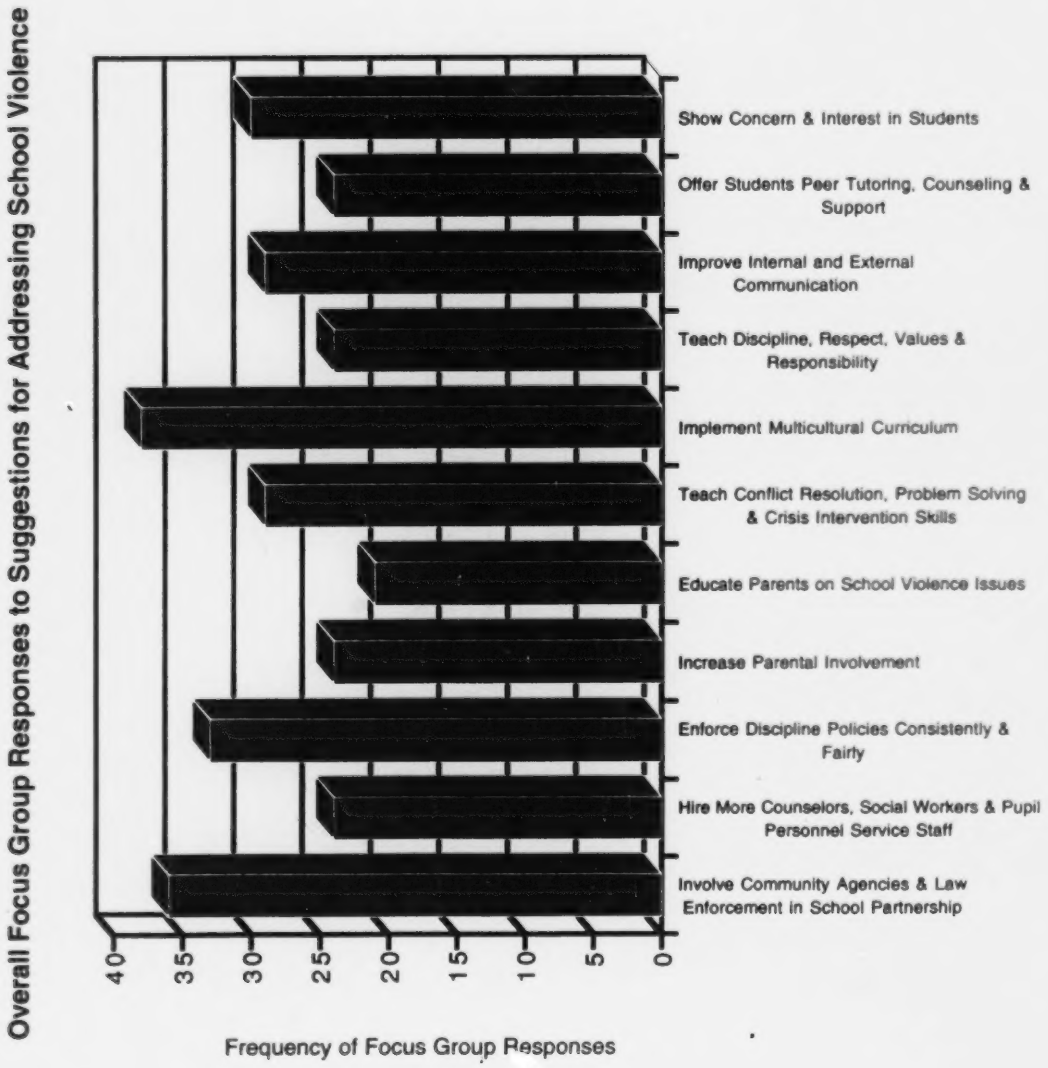

Overall Focus Group Responses to Suggestions for Addressing School Violence
Show Concern & Interest in Students
Offer Students Peer Tutoring, Counseling & Support
Improve Internal and External Communication
Teach Discipline, Respect, Values & Responsibility
Implement Multicultural Curriculum
Teach Conflict Resolution, Problem Solving & Crisis Intervention Skills
Educate Parents on School Violence Issues
Increase Parental Involvement
Enforce Discipline Policies Consistently & Fairly
Hire More Counselors, Social Workers & Pupil Personnel Service Staff
Involve Community Agencies & Law Enforcement in School Partnership
40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
Frequency of Focus Group Responses

Figure 4

Overall Focus Group Responses to Training Needed to Address School Violence

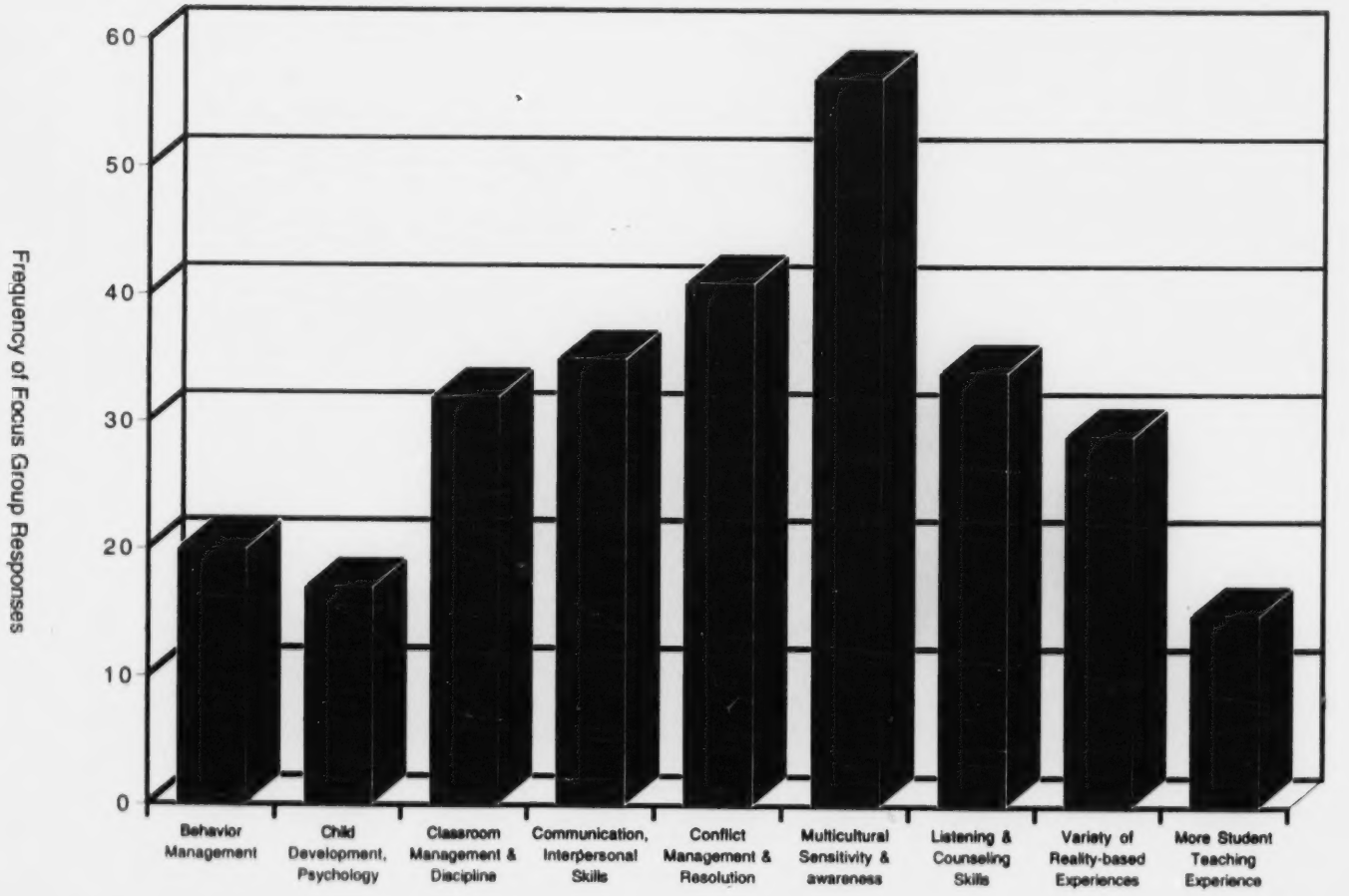


Figure 5

Focus Group Constituency Responses to Experiences of School Violence

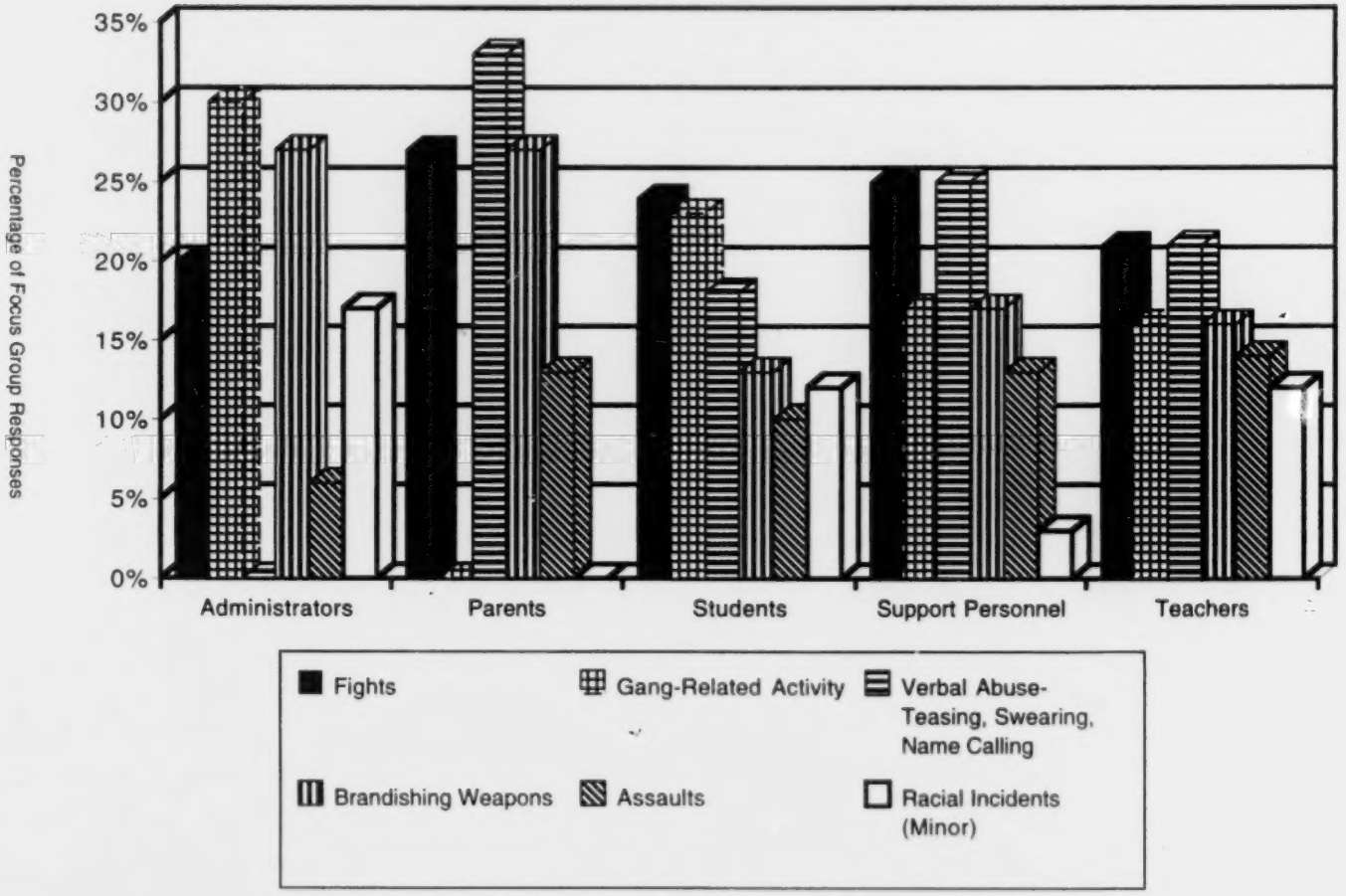


Figure 6

Focus Group Constituency Responses to Causes of School Violence

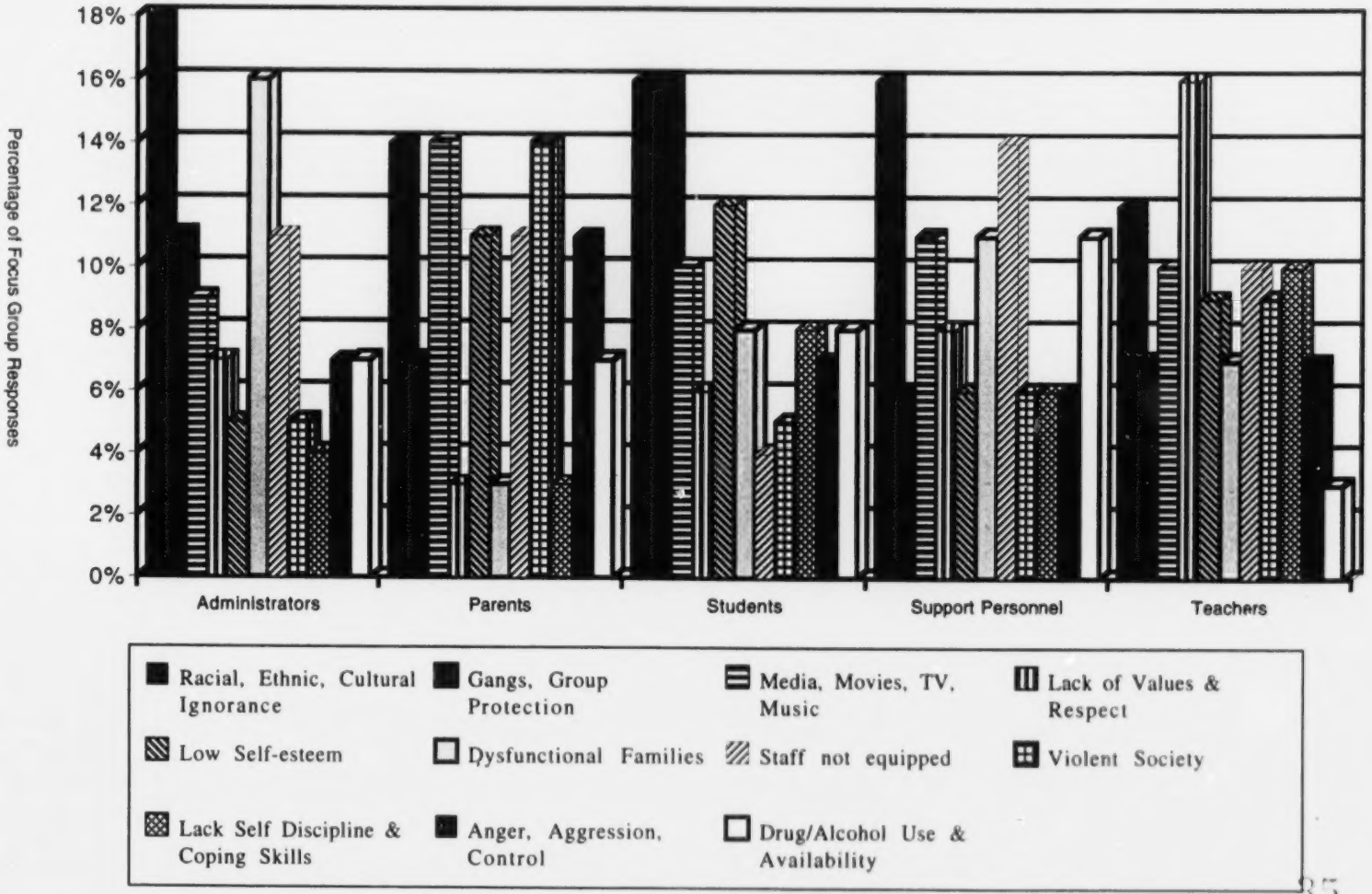


Figure 7

Focus Group Constituency Responses to Suggestions for Addressing School Violence

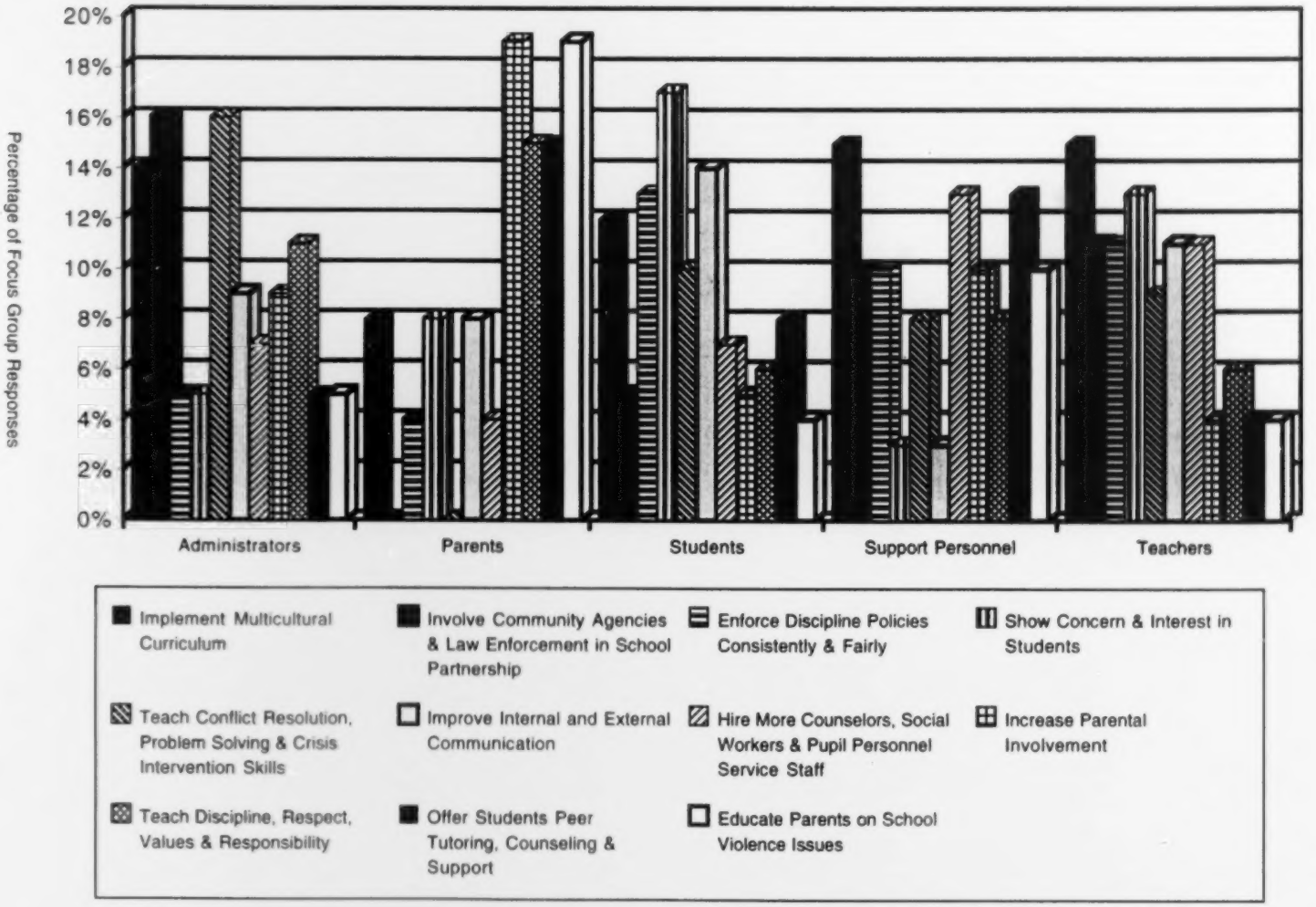
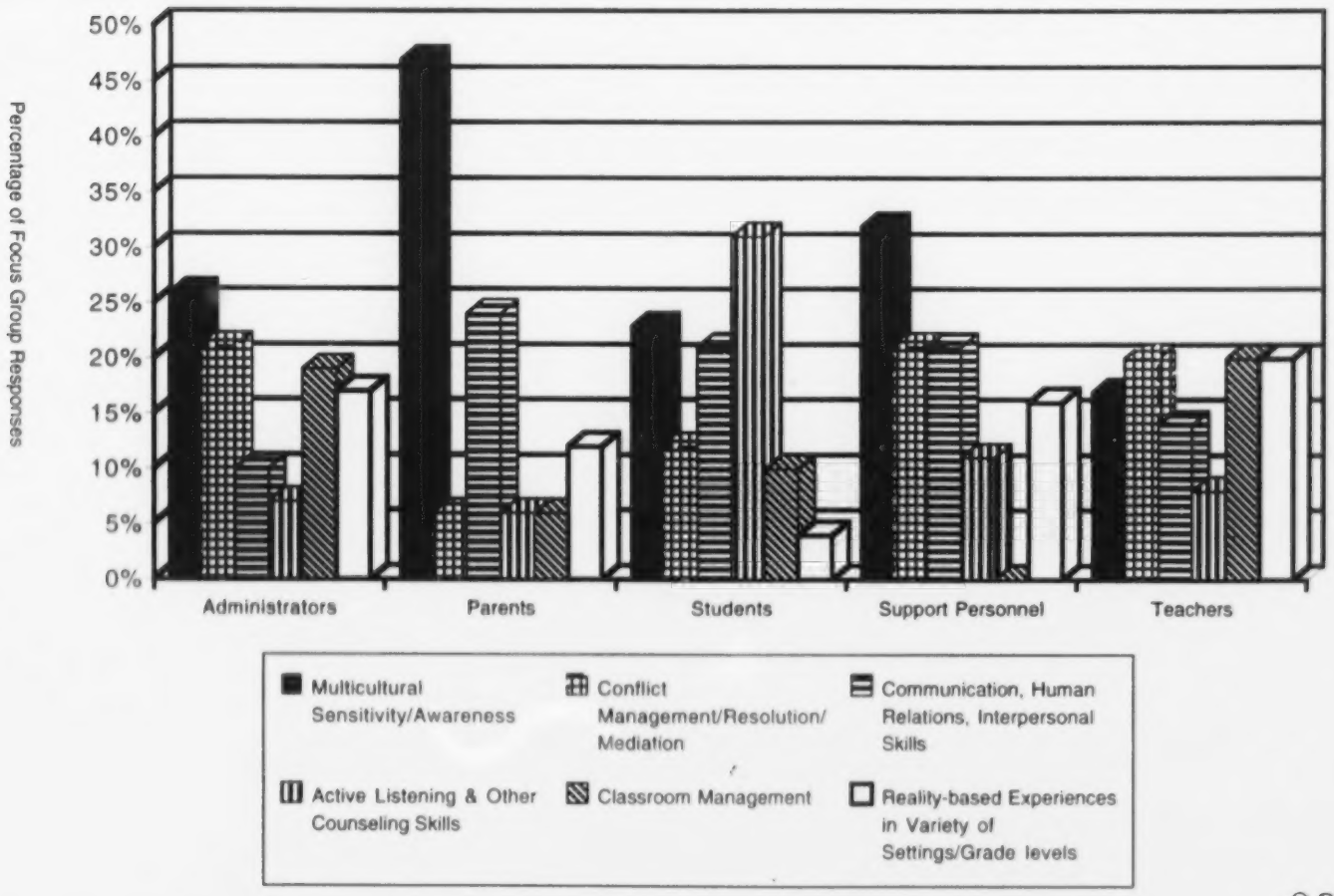


Figure 8

Focus Group Constituency Responses to Training Needed to Address School Violence



SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Focus group participants provided valuable information on their experience with school violence, their perceptions of the causes of school violence, as well as numerous suggestions for strategies to address the problem of school violence.

> Teachers should receive instruction in the knowledge and skill necessary to utilize and involve community members and resources in the educational process in order to build an effective relationship with the community.

As a result of the focus group results and other information gained through this study, the panel developed recommendations concerning teachers, school administrators, pupil personnel service providers, other educators, educational system consumers, criminal justice agencies, local communities, and the Legislature.

Following is an overview of the advisory panel's recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHERS

Know legal and professional responsibilities

1. *Teachers* should receive instruction in the knowledge and skill necessary to address their legal and professional responsibilities with regard to student behavior and school safety.

Build safe, positive, nurturing climate

2. *Teachers* should receive instruction in the knowledge and skill necessary to build a safe, positive, and nurturing school climate.

Utilize, involve, community members and resources

3. *Teachers* should receive instruction in the knowledge and skill necessary to utilize and involve community members and resources in the educational process in order to build effective relationships with the community.

Know crisis prevention, management, containment and resolution

4. *Teachers* should receive instruction in knowledge and skill in crisis prevention, crisis management, crisis containment, and crisis resolution.

Participate in safe school planning process

5. *Teachers* should participate in the ongoing safe school planning process.

Build effective relationships

6. *Teachers* should receive instruction in the knowledge and skill necessary to build effective relationships between the school and each student's home.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Demonstrate positive attitudes

1. *School administrators* should demonstrate positive attitudes toward students, parents and personnel, and should possess knowledge and skills that contribute to a positive and safe school climate for students and staff.

School administrators should serve as examples by encouraging other school staff to ensure the consistent and fair application of rules and to make honoring diversity a high priority.

Obtain active parental involvement

2. *School administrators* should work proactively to obtain active parental involvement by valuing their presence at school, and by seeking their suggestions for improving school climate and preventing violence.

Ensure open vehicles for expressions of concern

3. *School administrators* should ensure that there are open vehicles for student, parent and teacher expressions of concern related to school safety, violence of all forms, school community safety issues and personal well-being. Administrators should take leadership roles to seek open discourse and private opinions and suggestions for school safety improvement.

Make school violence-related issues a priority for staff development days

4. *School administrators* should ensure that school violence-related issues and concerns are a priority agenda item when plans are made for the utilization of the (eight) staff development days available to most California schools under AB 777, the School-Based Coordination Act.

Ensure support system for all new staff

5. *School administrators* should ensure that a strong support system is in place for all new school teachers, administrators, support staff and others joining a school for at least their first six to twelve months of service.

Keep extracurricular activities, even during hard times

6. Even in times of very limited resources, *school administrators* should make every effort to keep extracurricular activities and programming available in order to provide alternatives to street/gang involvement.

Ensure inspection of physical environment

7. *School administrators* should ensure that school staffs inspect the physical environment of the school campus to ascertain a safe and secure setting.

Maintain positive and safe school climate

8. Commission standards concerning the Management of School Functions should include a requirement that each *administrator* candidate has the skills and abilities to work with faculty, parents, students, and the community to develop and maintain a positive and safe school climate.

Create partnerships for new sources of revenue

9. *School administrators* should create partnerships with businesses and nonprofit organizations for the purpose of identifying new sources of revenue to pay for prevention programs and strategies. Such a relationship could also provide contacts to set up work readiness and economic advancement opportunities, especially for high-risk youth.

Know how to manage change and conflict

10. *School administrators* should possess the knowledge, skills and abilities to manage change and conflict in the school setting, to promote safety, and to intervene in crises.

Know legal, ethical and professional responsibilities

11. *School administrators* should be knowledgeable about legal, ethical and professional responsibilities essential for administering effective, safe and peaceful schools.

Know how to address aftermath of violence

12. *School administrators* should possess skills and sensitivity to address the aftermath of violence with those who have experienced or witnessed it.

Serve as examples

13. *School administrators* should serve as examples by encouraging other school staff to ensure the consistent and fair application of rules and to make honoring diversity a high priority.

Ensure coordinated violence efforts

14. *School administrators* should ensure that school violence efforts are coordinated both among school personnel on the school grounds as well as with people in the community.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICE PROVIDERS

Know safety, prevention and intervention strategies

1. *Pupil personnel service providers* should possess knowledge and skills related to school violence safety, prevention and intervention, as well as responding to the aftermath of violence when it occurs.

Be trained to systematically collect information

2. *Pupil personnel service providers* should be specifically trained in procedures to help

schools systematically collect information about the safety and nurturing climate of the school.

Participate in safe-school planning

3. Preparation of *pupil personnel service providers* should include knowledge and skills related to participating in school-based planning efforts to create safe school plans.

Know how to address intimidation on campuses and provide support groups

4. Pupil personnel service providers should possess knowledge and skills related to the implementation of primary prevention and intervention counseling programs addressing intimidation on school campuses. They should have the ability to provide support groups for victims and perpetrators.

Provide parent education and facilitate effective partnerships

5. *School psychologists, counselors and social workers* should be prepared to provide parent education and to collaborate with parents, youth, and the community to facilitate effective partnerships with schools on violence prevention and intervention efforts.

Address negative effects of bullying

6. *Pupil personnel service providers* should be trained to recognize and address negative effects of bullying, hazing, and intimidation on school campuses.

Address sexual harassment

7. *Pupil personnel service providers* should be knowledgeable about sexual harassment and date rape issues.

Know about anger and hostility control

8. *Pupil personnel service providers* should be knowledgeable about how to establish training programs for both students and school staff that emphasize primary prevention and intervention, addressing the anger and hostility expressed by youth.

Know about school-linked services

9. *Pupil personnel service providers* should be knowledgeable about the various models of school-based or school-linked social, health, and other human services, and how to coordinate such services with school and community officials.

Know about changing demographics and emerging educational trends

10. Continuing professional development for *pupil personnel service providers* should include an on-going analysis of roles and responsibilities of staff in relation to changing demographics and emerging educational trends that include restructuring, school-based health and human services, assessments, and other state initiatives.

School psychologists, counselors and social workers should be prepared to collaborate with parents, youth, and the community on violence prevention and intervention efforts.

Know about conflict mediation

11. *Pupil personnel service providers* should be knowledgeable about various approaches for conflict mediation and have practical experiences developing these skills in school situations in order to instruct other school personnel.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOL CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEES

School districts should provide training

1. School districts should provide training for *classified employees*, which would include conflict resolution, first aid, emergency response, child abuse identification and drug awareness, among other topics.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOL BOARDS

Clear policy addressing school violence

1. All California *school boards* should be required to have a clearly stated policy addressing school violence.

On-going training for board members

2. *School board members* in the state of California should be encouraged to have on-going training for board members on changing demographics, community needs and problems, and the readiness of the district to address school violence.

School boards should be encouraged to have on-going training for board members on changing demographics, community needs and problems, and the readiness of the district to address school violence.

Student representation on board

3. *School boards* should be encouraged to include student representation on their board as formal, full-fledged voting members, or at least, as ex-officio members.

Input from students

4. *School board members* should be encouraged to develop some on-going mechanism that allows the board to obtain input from students on a broad range of issues, including school violence.

Make violence a top priority

5. *School boards* should be encouraged to make the prevention and reduction of school violence a top priority.

Support site administrator for repeat discipline cases

6. *School boards* should make revisions in the student discipline (policy) process where necessary to give site administrators support for repeat discipline cases by creating more alternative programs/sites to handle students who act aggressively on school campuses.

Expand mentor teacher program

7. *School boards* should consider expanding mentor teacher programs and otherwise providing incentives for teachers.

Require community service

8. *School boards* should consider requiring community service as part of the high school graduation requirements.

Promote School/Law Partnership Cadre

9. *School boards* should promote the School/Law Partnership Cadre (sponsored

by the California Department of Education and Attorney General Office) and facilitate efforts to increase collaboration between the Cadre and local county and district education offices.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR UNIONS AND OTHER PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Make membership aware of key issues

1. Through their newsletters, journals and other mediums of communication, *Unions and Other Professional Organizations* should make their membership aware of the key issues and concerns regarding school violence.

Offer workshops

2. At their annual conferences and at other forums, *Unions and Other Professional Organizations* should offer workshops, plenary and activity sessions, and have keynote addresses focusing on school violence issues.

Initiate special studies and other research efforts

3. As an area of specific interest, *Unions and Other Professional Organizations* should initiate special studies and other research efforts that address school violence as it relates to their constituency/ membership.

Setup committee or task group to investigate violence

4. *Unions and Other Professional Organizations* should set up a standing or ad hoc committee or task group to investigate the frequency of incidents and experiences, causes, solutions and specific training needed to address the problem of school violence, as it relates to their members.

Collaborate with others to develop initiatives, policies and procedures

5. *Unions and Other Professional Organizations* should formally develop initiatives, policies and procedures in collaboration with others to address issues related to prevention, intervention, and resolution of school violence.

Unions and Other Professional Organizations should formally develop initiatives, policies and procedures in collaboration with others to address issues related to prevention, intervention, and resolution of school violence.

Make violence issues a high priority

6. *Unions and Other Professional Organizations* should use their influences to make school violence issues a high priority for the organization at all levels - national, state, regional and local.

Encourage involvement to accept a full-day, full-campus orientation to safety

7. *Unions and Other Professional Organizations* should encourage their membership's involvement in the development and maintenance of a campus climate that extends beyond the four walls of the classroom or school building. All school personnel should be encouraged to accept a full-day, full-campus orientation to safety.

Develop programs

8. *Unions and Other Professional Organizations* should promote continuing development programs that address current and essential school violence and safety knowledge and skills.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY PERSONNEL

Stay abreast of knowledge in the field

1. *College and university personnel* who train educators should stay abreast of knowledge in the field regarding prevention, intervention and responses to school violence through professional development activities.

Structure coursework to promote active problem-solving

2. *College and university personnel* who train educators should structure coursework to promote active problem-solving about school violence issues including how schools can be restructured to decrease conflict, aggression and violence.

Offer inservice workshops

3. *College and university personnel* with specialized knowledge in the areas of school violence prevention and intervention should offer inservice workshops and parent training in the community.

Collaborate with local schools to secure grants

4. *College and university personnel* who train educators should collaborate with local schools to secure grants to implement pilot or model programs to meet the needs of all children.

Create safe learning environment for diverse viewpoints

5. *College and university personnel* should create a safe and comfortable learning environment in their classrooms where diverse viewpoints can be discussed and respected. Multicultural understanding helps prevent conflict at school.

On-going collaboration between professors and practitioners

6. *College and university personnel* should continue on-going collaboration between college professors of student teachers and school site practitioners. College and university personnel should consider hiring those exceptional school site persons, who work with school violence issues all the time in their schools, as adjunct professors.

Encourage students to initiate studies

7. *College and university personnel* should encourage advanced students to initiate studies, special projects and other research-like endeavors to advance the knowledge base of information concerning school violence.

College and university personnel should encourage advanced students to initiate studies, special projects and other research-like endeavors to advance the knowledge base of information concerning school violence.

Such undertakings could involve the investigation of positive and negative affects of computer technology on school-age youth or strategies to make this technology more education friendly.

Students should learn, practice, and share appropriate social skills and learn to accept personal and social responsibility.

CSU and UC form system-wide task force

8. *College and university personnel* in CSU and UC university systems should form system-wide task forces for the purpose of reviewing curriculum, examining innovative practices, and incorporating approaches to violence prevention and intervention in credential programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSUMERS OF EDUCATION

Understand and appreciate own culture and culture of others

1. *Students* should understand and appreciate their own culture and the culture of others.

Learn decision making and leadership skills

2. *Students* should learn critical decision making and leadership skills and utilize them to ensure their personal safety on and off campus.

Active in safe school planning and decision making policy processes

3. *Students* should assume an active role in the safe school planning process as well as becoming involved in the school decision making policy process.

Social skills, personal and social responsibility

4. *Students* should learn, practice, and share appropriate social skills and learn to accept personal and social responsibility.

Active language learners

5. *Students* should be active language learners in order to responsibly communicate in various forms and settings, their needs and concerns.

Make community a better, safer place

6. *Students* should accept the responsibility to help make their community a better and safer place.

Learn healthy parenting skills

7. *Students* should take the initiative to learn (healthy) parenting skills from well informed members of their environment.

Key participants in safe school planning and governance processes

8. *Parents/caregivers* should be key participants in the safe school planning process as well as other school governance committees, and they should receive training to participate effectively in this process.

Active interest in education of children

9. *Parents/caregivers* should demonstrate an active interest in the education of their children.

Receive training

10. *Parents/caregivers* should receive training in conflict management, cultural sensitivity training, basic communication, resource awareness, parent rights and responsibilities in the school and other skills.

Volunteer

11. *Parents/caregivers* should volunteer for roles such as bilingual and/or English speaking community liaison, after-school tutors, or as monitors to patrol school halls and campus grounds.

Parents/caregivers should be key participants in the safe school planning process as well as other school governance committees, and they should receive training to participate effectively in this process.

Responsive to community resources

12. *Parents/caregivers* should be receptive, open and responsive to various community resources that promote family well being.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE AGENCIES

Familiar with and sensitive to school climate and culture

1. *Law enforcement agencies* should train their school resource officers to be familiar with and sensitive to the school climate and culture. They should also be a part of the safe school planning process.

Prevention and/or early intervention activities

2. *Law enforcement agencies* should develop programs that encourage officers to participate in prevention and/or early intervention activities on school campuses.

School district notification of students found guilty of violent acts

3. *Probation and parole departments* should know and implement the laws related to notification of school districts of students with juvenile offenses under their supervision, especially those students who have been found guilty of violent acts.

Law enforcement agencies should train their school resource officers to be familiar with and sensitive to the school climate and culture. They should also be a part of the safe school planning process.

Assigned to School Attendance Review Board

4. *Probation and parole officers* should be assigned to serve as members of local and county School Attendance Review Boards and other multi-agency committees that provide services to students and their families.

School safety planning committee

5. *Probation and parole departments* should be represented on all school safety planning committees.

Refer parents of incarcerated youth to parent education

6. *Probation and parole department* officers working with youthful offenders should be trained to refer parents of incarcerated youth to parent education and other social and health services. They might also consider training their staff to teach parent education classes to parents of youthful offenders, such as the program in Los Angeles County.

Prioritize the prosecution of school violence cases

7. *The Prosecutor's Office* should assist school districts by prioritizing the prosecution of cases related to school violations including gun and drug-free zones, weapons on campus, school truancy and failure of parents to compel school attendance, gang offenses, and other school incidents.

Develop truancy mediation programs

8. *The Prosecutor's Office* should develop truancy mediation programs that can assist schools in the enforcement of school attendance laws.

Participate in School Attendance Review Boards and safe school planning

9. *The Prosecutor's Office* staff should participate in local and county School Attendance Review Boards as well as safe schools planning committees.

The Prosecutor's Office should assist school districts by prioritizing the prosecution of cases related to school violations including gun and drug-free zones, weapons on campus, school truancy and failure of parents to compel school attendance, gang offenses, and other school incidents.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Linkages with schools

1. *Community Groups* should create formal and informal linkages with schools.

Expand programs

2. *Business organizations* should expand mentor and internship programs.

Use expertise

3. *Business organizations* should use areas of expertise to expand career awareness opportunities.

Make violence a priority

4. *Civic organizations* should make school violence issues a priority.

Educate congregations

5. *Religious leaders* should educate their congregations to become involved with schools and to support school initiatives.

Establish support systems

6. *Religious leaders* should establish support systems for their congregations, to ensure school success (such as tutorials, homework centers and mentoring programs).

Provide opportunities, locations for after school activities

7. *Religious leaders* should provide opportunities and locations for after school activities, such as sponsorships to cultural, social and recreational activities, attending plays, going to museums and participating in positive, family-centered activities.

Make safe schools a priority

8. *Labor organizations* that are school related (such as the CA Organization of School Security, and CA Food Service Organization) should make safe schools a priority.

Work collaboratively with schools

9. *Local parks and recreation departments* should work collaboratively with schools to reduce school violence.

County provide literature and training

10. All *county offices of education* should have literature on how to adopt a school, and should provide training to those wishing to adopt a school.

Allow paid administrative leave to volunteers

11. *Federal, state and local units of government* should establish policies that would allow government employees paid administrative leave to work as a volunteer at schools.

Establish incentives

12. *Federal and state governments* should establish a system of tax credits as incentives for employers whose employees provide volunteer services to schools.

Schools: have programs to recruit, train, coordinate, utilize, and reward volunteers

13. *Volunteers* should be able to rely on schools to have active, well coordinated programs to recruit, train, coordinate, utilize, and reward volunteers who assist in providing a safe and secure environment on campus.

Religious leaders should establish support systems for their congregations, to ensure school success (such as tutorials, homework centers and mentoring programs).

Training to take leadership role

14. *Volunteers* should be trained to take a leadership role in the establishment and implementation of the volunteer programs in order to reduce the dependence of those programs on school personnel.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS

Training to collaborate with schools

1. The training of *health and social service providers* should include the knowledge and skills necessary to collaborate effectively with school personnel and the district's diverse school population.

Knowledgeable about school culture and climate

2. *Health and social service providers* should be knowledgeable about the school culture and climate.

Consultation training

3. *Health and social service providers* should receive training in consultation skills to work directly with teachers and other school personnel.

Provide preservice and inservice training

4. *Health and social service providers* who have specialized knowledge and training in an area related to school violence should provide preservice and inservice training for teachers and other school personnel, not only in the aftermath of a crisis, but also as a preventive intervention.

Crisis response teams coordinate planning efforts

5. Crisis response teams from city and county *Health And Social Service Agencies* should coordinate their planning efforts with the crisis response teams for the local school districts.

The training of health and social service providers should include the knowledge and skills necessary to collaborate effectively with school personnel and the district's diverse school population.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE LEGISLATURE

The California Legislature can assist educators and the communities they serve to meaningfully address school violence. Legislative efforts should be part of a statewide school violence reduction master plan. Without such coordination, specific efforts will not be maximally effective.

The Commission is prepared to sponsor legislative recommendation #1 below. Other legislative recommendations are suggestions for legislators to take into consideration as they seek potential solutions to the problem of school violence. These other eleven legislative recommendations are meritorious, but they should not take priority over other Commission-sponsored initiatives and programs.

Fund project to implement recommendations

1. Fund a five-year, on-going pilot project to implement the recommendations in this report. The pilot project would assess and evaluate successful programs, including the identification of what makes them work and how they could be transferred to other school districts. Special emphasis should be given to early intervention strategies.

Interagency collaboration resource learning centers

2. Develop pilot interagency collaboration resource learning centers on school sites.

Legislative Recommendations

Extracurricular activities provide alternatives

3. Make resources available for extracurricular activities and programming for young people to provide alternatives to street/gang involvement.

Support truancy mediation programs

4. Pursue legislation that allocates funds to support truancy mediation programs within the District Attorney's Office.

Positive parenting

5. Fund pilot programs on positive parenting.

Examine manner services are delivered

6. Examine the manner in which (state and local) government services are delivered to students and families requiring support from more than one agency.

Research on learning outcomes

7. Fund research on the effects of television, computers, videos, film, video games, music, etc., on learning outcomes, the behavior of youth, and any connection with school violence.

Categorical funding include safety and school climate strategies

8. Stipulate that categorical funding of educational programs should require a school or district to identify the way funding is going to include school safety and school climate strategies.

Fund a five-year, on-going pilot project to implement the recommendations in this report. The pilot project would assess and evaluate successful programs, including the identification of what makes them work and how they could be transferred to other school districts. Special emphasis should be given to early intervention strategies.

Reform initiatives should address school safety

9. Require that Healthy Start, integrated services models, enterprise schools, Learn Schools, and other educational reform initiatives should address and field test models for addressing school safety, school and community violence, school climate and conflict of all forms as part of their plans.

Licensure agencies should require training

10. Stipulate that social service provider organizations, certification bodies and state licensure agencies should require training that address policies, approaches and strategies that foster collaboration with school personnel in improving school climate, school safety, and parental involvement.

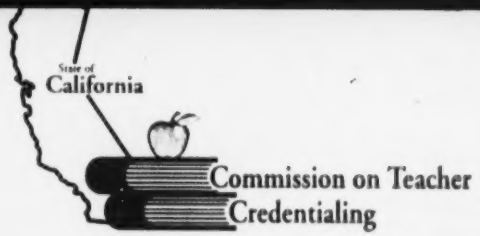
Legislative Recommendations

Uniform incident report procedures

11. Enact a uniform school crime/discipline incident report procedure that is empirically validated and checked for reliability across districts.

School safety plans required

12. All public schools in California should be required to develop school safety plans that are well integrated with general school improvement efforts. Such programs should include crises intervention teams.



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Final Report